

## GEMS SCHOOLS LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD POLICY

### POLICY ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Title:	Local Advisory Board Policy
Identifier:	LAB 2020
Date of Last Review:	August 2020
Status:	Statutory
Staff Lead:	CEO/Principal
Review Process:	Annually
Location:	Website
Reviewed and Approved:	August 2020

*'Education is a fundamental element for the development of a nation and the best investment in its youth'*

## UAE National Agenda

Building strong school governance to help create a national education sector, with enduring and consistent quality, is a major initiative for all UAE schools, as we work together towards achieving [Vision 2021](#). GEMS is committed to establishing sound, purposeful governance through the establishment of a Local Advisory Board (LAB) in every GEMS school.

## Role and Function

The LAB functions primarily as an advisory board and holds an important strategic role in overseeing the achievement of the Academy's strategic aims and objectives. The LAB will:

- understand and uphold the Academy's and GEMS vision and values
- monitor, advise and support the Academy on matters of strategy and policy
- help monitor the Academy's standards and performance
- support the Academy and the CEO/Principal and seek to provide wise counsel

Members are a group of experienced and skilled individuals from diverse backgrounds, who add a great deal to improve the Academy's performance. Members are mindful of the role and responsibilities of the CEO/Principal, and understand and appreciate the relationship of GEMS (the company) to the Academy.

The LAB is not involved in financial matters, appointing staff, the day to day running of the school, admissions, individual issues or grievances, or any other matters which are the remit of GEMS or the school's leadership.

The school is a member of the GEMS Education Group. The headquarters of the Group is located in Dubai, UAE and operates through Premier Schools International LLC (the Corporate Office). The Corporate Office is generally responsible for supporting the school financially and supplying human resources, legal support, certain procurement and enrolment support.

The LAB assists with monitoring the activity and performance of the school by supporting the school's senior leaders to be fully accountable for the school's outcomes. Working in partnership with the school, the LAB actively collaborates, engages and challenges the Academy through constructive dialogue at all times. Confidentiality must be assured by all members of the LAB at all times.

## Composition

Chosen for their skills and expertise, the LAB consists of 5 to 10 members, including the CEO/Principal and a member drawn from the School Support Centre. A senior leader from another GEMS school is desirable. One of the Board Members (not the CEO/Principal) will be appointed Chair by the LAB. This appointment is for one year, with an election by the LAB for each year thereafter. This is an important role and the relationship with the CEO/Principal, and other members of the LAB is one of mutual trust.

There should be a diversity of profiles with consideration given to ethnicity, gender and age.

Current and past parents of the school are a good source for potential Board Members. It needs to be understood that no Board Member is representing a discrete group of stakeholders, or is an advocate for a particular point of view; LABs are a collective group.

## Appointment of Board Members

Initially, it will fall to the CEO/Principal to form the inaugural LAB, but it will be the long term responsibility of the LAB to ensure that a list of potential members of substance, without conflict of interest to the Academy or GEMS, is maintained.

The CEO/Principal and Chair will research / vet potential members and the LAB will approve the appointment of new members.

Board Members may serve for a period of three consecutive years, which may be renewed for a further term with the approval of the LAB.

Members are probationary for one year. The appointment will be confirmed, or otherwise, at the end of this period by the Chair.

Replacements for Board Members who have stepped down can be made at any time. The list of names of Board Members is maintained by the Academy. The list of those available from the Schools Support Centre will be kept in the centre.

## Responsibilities

The role of a Board Member is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a 'doing' role.

A Board Member is expected to:

- A. contribute to the strategic discussions at LAB meetings which help determine:
  - the vision and ethos of the Academy
  - clear strategic priorities and targets for the Academy

- B. assist the Academy in the monitoring of their performance including:
- reviewing the outcomes of the Academy's self-evaluation (SEF)
  - considering relevant data and feedback on Academy performance
  - listening to the Academy's stakeholders (i.e. students, parents, staff, local community, the wider GEMS family) to help inform advice and support given
- C. upon request, serve on sub-committees, working parties, panels as appropriate, for example, when a new CEO/Principal is appointed

### **Method of working**

At all times the LAB's deliberations are confidential. Members are subject to a code of conduct (please see appendix A) which, along with this policy, sets out the expectations and commitment required.

The CEO/Principal will ensure that each Board Member is invited to the Academy for an induction at the beginning of their term of office. This will include meeting senior staff, touring the Academy, seeing the Academy in action and meeting students. Training sessions may be offered from time to time through the School Support Centre.

The LAB will meet 3 times each year. Dates are set well in advance and Board Members are requested to ensure their attendance.

In advance of the meeting, the agenda, which will have been prepared by the CEO/Principal with approval of the Chair, will be circulated. Board Members will be able to request items for the agenda in advance. Possible agenda items, although not exhaustive, might include:

- Academy Planning (SEF / SIP)
- Inspection and Review Data
- Academy Policies
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures
- Stakeholder satisfaction data
- Curriculum overviews
- Use of facilities and plans for refurbishment / development

A brief report / summary statement from the CEO/Principal is a standing item.

At the beginning of a termly meeting there could be an opportunity to meet staff. Presentations could also be made to the LAB e.g. by a Head of Department, Grade Leader or by a Teacher leading a particular initiative.

Minutes are taken by an Admin Assistant. They will record action points which should be circulated within two weeks of the meeting and will be reviewed at the following meeting, with matters arising as required.

Board Members are volunteers who are asked to give their time to the Academy. There should be no administrative work for Board Members. It is assumed that all papers will be read by each Board Member in advance of the termly meeting, and time taken to prepare questions and comments. All papers are to be received by Board Members a full week before every meeting.

The LAB can create additional working groups or sub-committees as appropriate.

## **Review**

Successful Governance significantly impacts on the Academy's leadership and direction. It ensures that progress and achievements continuously advance the Academy. How effective the LAB is will depend on many factors, not least the quality of the Board Members and their willingness to contribute to the Academy through their advice, time and commitment.

It is intended that all GEMS schools will have their LAB in place from January 2017, and will be using this policy to guide function and values.

As part of the regular school reviews, the work and effectiveness of the LAB will be included. It is not otherwise intended that the School Support Centre will be actively involved in the work of the LAB.

In addition, the LAB should conduct a self-review during November / December each year. Guidance from the School Support Centre will be given.

GEMS will undertake to engage an external review of Governance across all of its schools during the third year of their operation (January 2019 - December 2019) to review their effectiveness across the whole company, and the contribution they are making towards achieving UAE [Vision 2021](#).

## **Best Practice**

An effective Board Member will:

- get to know the Academy well, undertake induction, visit Academy activities and events
- attend and participate in meetings and come prepared
- act in the best interests of the Academy at all times
- behave in a professional manner
- maintain confidentiality

## Appendix A

# GEMS SCHOOLS' LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT

Name:

Academy:

As a Board Member I agree to the following:

### Role and Responsibilities

- I understand and accept the purpose of the Local Advisory Board and the roles of the CEO / Principal and GEMS Education
- I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Local Advisory Board
- I will act fairly and without prejudice
- I will maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Academy. My actions within the Academy and the local community will reflect this
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the Academy, I will follow the procedures established by the Academy. I will report such matters to the Academy and won't comment or engage in discussion with complainants

### Commitment

- I will make full efforts to attend every meeting, prepare in advance and contribute to the best of my ability
- I will undertake relevant induction and training
- I will get to know the Academy well

### Relationships

- I will strive to work as a member of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted
- I will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all communications
- I will support the Chair in their role of ensuring due process and appropriate conduct

### Confidentiality

- I will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside the Academy
- I will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding the Academy business arise outside meetings
- I will not reveal detail of any Local Advisory Board's decision

### **Declaration of other interests**

- I will record any pecuniary or business interest with the Academy in the Register of Interests
- I will record any interest in other schools
- I will declare any conflict of loyalty at meetings should the situation arise

### **Breach of the Code**

- If I believe the code to have been breached, I will inform the Chair immediately, who will investigate
- If the Chair has breached the code, another Governor will investigate
- I may expect to be asked to step down should an investigation show that I have breached the code

Signature:

Date: